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~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

SUMMARY

GENERAL

1. Comment on announced execution of Abakumov (page 3).
2. Comment on Tito-Nehru joint statement (page 4).

SOUTHEAST ASIA

3. Viet Minh plans liaison group in Laotian capital (page 4).
4. Karen insurgents in Burma plan to step up operations (page 5).

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

5. Recent Arab League meeting made no progress on regional defense (page 6).

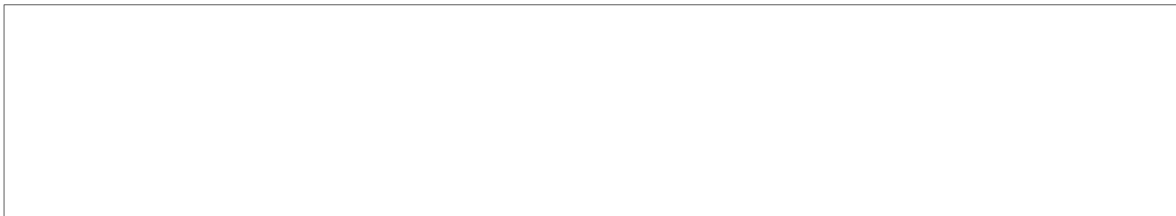
EASTERN EUROPE

6. Yugoslavs allegedly pulling back from Balkan Pact commitments (page 6).
7. Tough speech of Hungarian Communist leader seen as heralding end of "popular front honeymoon" (page 7).

WESTERN EUROPE

8.

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~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

GENERAL

1. Comment on announced execution of Abakumov:

[redacted] The announcement, at this time, of the execution of Abakumov and several of his associates, two years after their reported arrest, suggests that the principle of collegial leadership in the USSR is presently under severe strain. It is not inconceivable, however, that the announcement was designed by the leadership to attract further popular support through criticism of the Stalin regime and its ruthless police methods.

The nature of the charges, particularly that the "Leningrad case" was "falsified," suggests a move against Malenkov by one or more of his colleagues. The reference to the "Leningrad case" apparently applies to the widespread shake-up of the Leningrad party organization in 1949 when Abakumov was the USSR security chief. At that time, Malenkov was generally credited with using his own henchmen to replace numerous Zhdanov appointees who, although not publicly tried, disappeared from public life. This shake-up appeared as an outgrowth of the struggle for control of the party apparatus under Stalin.

On the other hand, Malenkov, himself, may be behind the move. He may wish to rid himself once and for all of any association with the Leningrad affair by publicly blaming it on Abakumov and Beria. At the same time, he may also be serving notice to a possible minority group among the leadership, that the post-Stalin policies inside the USSR will continue and public manifestations of disagreement with the leadership will not be tolerated.

Support for the thesis that there may be some strain among the top leaders has appeared in several recent incidents. Molotov has seemed unhappy with the informal and friendly manner in which Malenkov and one or two others discuss matters of Soviet foreign policy with foreign representatives. The American embassy in Moscow noted that on 21 December, Stalin's birthday, Pravda, the party newspaper, and Izvestia, the government newspaper, differed considerably on the relative emphasis to be accorded heavy industry and production of consumers' goods. These differences did not appear again.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

Subsequently, first TASS on 23 December and then Pravda on the 24th, carried an account of a three-month-old interview between Khrushchev and a British scientist. In this interview, according to the embassy, the Soviet leader used the formula regarding the relationship between heavy industry and consumer goods industries which has been used since the inauguration of the post-Stalin consumers goods and agricultural programs. The embassy remarked that the publication of this interview suggests that any differences among the leaders have either been resolved or at least a decision reached to conceal them.

2. Comment on Tito-Nehru joint statement:

[REDACTED] The joint statement issued by Tito and Nehru on 23 December following their five-day talks in New Delhi clearly indicates that their meeting has produced no significant results. In insisting that the policy of "nonalignment" is not passive "neutralism," but is a "positive, active" policy leading toward "collective peace," the document suggests a particular sensitivity to the criticism that "nonalignment" means "do nothing."

Since Tito's break with the Cominform in 1948, propaganda from both New Delhi and Belgrade has emphasized the similarity of India's and Yugoslavia's policies--declaring their independence of either power bloc and stressing the "common bond" of their socialistic objectives. The Tito-Nehru talks will probably result in future attempts to reinforce each other's importance as mediators of the world's problems. However, their categorical objection to a "third force" or "bloc" idea suggests that future indo-Yugoslav co-operation probably will not be much greater than in the past. [REDACTED]

SOUTHEAST ASIA

3. Viet Minh plans liaison group in Laotian capital:

[REDACTED] The Viet Minh is planning to send certain Pathet Lao leaders to the Laotian capital of Vientiane in order to "strengthen the

~~TOP SECRET~~

position of the feudal classes, the bourgeoisie, and the independents against the pro-American party," [redacted]

[redacted] A Pathet Lao official, possibly Singapo, is to maintain permanent liaison with the "Phou Ma party."

Comment: A meeting between the Laotian premier, Katay Sasorith, and Pathet Lao leaders, including Singapo, has been tentatively set for 26 December. Katay has assured the American minister in Vientiane that he is aware of the dangers involved in dealing with the Pathet Lao, and that he has no intention whatever of admitting Pathet Lao officials into his government.

Viet Minh strategy apparently is to concentrate on the theme of "national liberation," depicting the United States as the obstacle to Laos' complete independence. The "Phou Ma party" may refer to Souvanna Phouma, the Laotian defense minister, who is a strong advocate of reconciliation with the Pathet Lao. His half-brother, Souphanouvong, is the Pathet Lao chief.

4. Karen insurgents in Burma plan to step up operations:

[redacted] Karen insurgents are planning to attack a number of important towns in the Irrawady delta in southern Burma in late December, [redacted]

[redacted] Karens hope to force a redeployment of Burmese army units and thereby thwart an impending attack on their headquarters in eastern Burma. The Karens also feel that such a redeployment will simplify their efforts to re-occupy Myawady, a village on the Thai border which they need as a point of entry for military supplies provided by a party known as "friend."

Comment: December marks the beginning of the military campaigning season in Burma, and there have been indications that government forces have been planning a major operation aimed at the Karens' eastern stronghold. While the Karens may be expected to launch attacks of their own, they are too weak to mount more than limited and small-scale raids. Six years of

~~TOP SECRET~~

constant fighting against increasingly superior forces has decimated their units, and their supply situation has long been close to critical.

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

5. Recent Arab League meeting made no progress on regional defense:

In the opinion of Faud Ammoun, Director of the Lebanese Foreign Ministry, nothing constructive was accomplished at the recent Arab League meeting in

Cairo. The meeting formally reaffirmed Arab intentions to enlarge co-operation on political, military and economic matters. Vague agreement was reached on co-operation with the Western powers and on obtaining military assistance "to assure defense of the region against any aggression providing there is no impingement of sovereignty."

Apparently Egyptian prime minister Nasr obliquely discouraged a move to permit Iraq greater latitude in making defense arrangements with the West.

Comment: This report confirms other impressions received of the results of the Arab League meeting.

EASTERN EUROPE

6. Yugoslavs allegedly pulling back from Balkan Pact commitments:

According to Ambassador Luce in Rome, Admiral Fechteler, the commander of NATO Southern European Forces, is

~~TOP SECRET~~

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concerned over reports which indicate serious Yugoslav reservations regarding the Balkan Pact. He understands that the Yugoslavs now consider themselves obliged to nothing more than a neutralist position if Bulgaria were to attack a member of the pact other than Yugoslavia. The Turks reportedly are greatly concerned over this attitude.

Comment: No other information has been received that the Yugoslavs have changed their attitude to the Balkan alliance, which makes assistance obligatory in the event of an attack on any one member. Yugoslav leaders continually state they will work to develop it. There have been no indications in intercepted messages or elsewhere that either Athens or Ankara is presently suspicious of Belgrade's intentions.

7. Tough speech of Hungarian Communist leader seen as heralding end of "popular front honeymoon":

The American legation in Budapest believes that a speech by Communist politburo member Rudolf Foldvari against religion and private farmers signified the beginning of the end of the "popular front honeymoon."

Foldvari told a meeting of Communist activists on 14 December that the class struggle against the Kulaks and the church must be continued. He warned party members not to "misinterpret" the recent Soviet resolution on religious tolerance because conditions in Hungary do not permit such a luxury.

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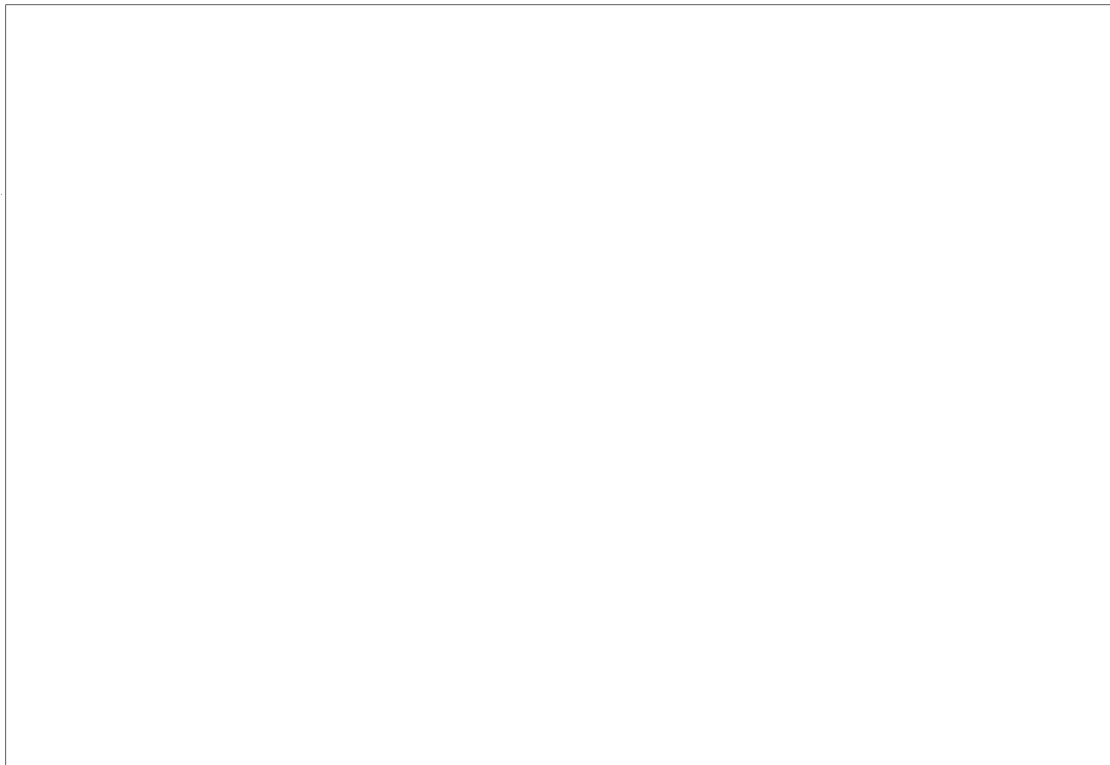
Comment: Available evidence does not support the legation's conclusion that the Hungarian government's policy of conciliation is coming to an end. Foldvari's speech appears to be simply a warning to Hungarian Communists that they themselves are not to adopt policies that are developed as a soothing syrup for the population as a whole. These policies have been marked by considerable confusion and vacillation in the regime's attitude toward private farmers and religion.

In every Satellite the vast majority of party members is ideologically weak, and as a result, East European Communists are likely to take tactics at their face value.

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WESTERN EUROPE

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